

VZCZCXR02216  
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA  
DE RUEHBP #1274 3021712  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 291712Z OCT 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8360  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 0408  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 0358  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0164

UNCLAS BAMAKO 001274

SIPDIS

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ACCRA FOR RECOORD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREF PHUM ML

SUBJECT: UNHCR REFUSES TO CLARIFY ITS ROLE OR MAKE  
ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO CONGOLESE REFUGEES

REF: A. OCT 19 PERKINS-SAMPSON EMAILS

¶B. BAMAKO 01067

¶C. BAMAKO 01196

¶11. The Embassy contacted UNHCR/Mali's Director Adama Kouyate on October 29 to inquire about the status of humanitarian assistance supposedly earmarked by UNHCR's Geneva headquarters for the 27 Congolese refugees now in Bamako (ref A). Director Kouyate claimed he was unaware of UNHCR Geneva's decision to help the Congolese and was openly hostile to the idea of granting anything beyond the USD 80 already given to each Congolese refugee upon their arrival in Bamako on September 17 (ref B).

¶12. Kouyate initially refused to believe the caller was an Embassy official (curiously, UNHCR/Mali's Deputy Director Mamadou Sidibe made the same assertion when contacted earlier in the month) and categorically refused to provide any information regarding UNHCR's support for the Congolese without first receiving an official letter from the Embassy. He maintained that the Congolese refugees in Bamako benefit from the same level of assistance UNHCR provides to other refugees, but refused to elaborate on what such "assistance" entails. Based on conversations with the Congolese and repeated attempts to pry information from UNHCR officials, UNHCR assistance for the Congolese, including access to medical care, is effectively nil.

¶13. On October 17 the Embassy informed Deputy Director Sidibe that the partner NGO charged by UNHCR to provide refugees with basic medical services had yet to receive funding from UNHCR and was therefore turning away refugees who sought medical care (ref C). Notwithstanding this, Mr. Sidibe was still referring individuals to the NGO as late as October 25, despite knowing full well that the NGO would be unable to help any refugees due to lack of funds.

¶14. Embassy is drafting a letter for Mr. Kouyate, and will continue to follow the case closely.

McCulley